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ACTION EUR-00

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TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, BE

SUBJECT: BRUSSELS MEDIA REACTION GWOT

I. (gwot) War on Terror

1. ?The 9/11 Perpetrators Should Have Trial in Due Form?

Baudouin Loos in left-of-center Le Soir (9/8) (circ. 97,500) comments: ?While his popularity has never been as low because of the Iraqi quagmire, President Bush scored a nice success in front of the families of the 9/11 victims by announcing that the main suspects were soon going to be tried?

?Everyone could be pleased to hear that those who are suspected of having committed the worst terrorist attacks in modern history will at last face justice. But things are not that simple?

?The trials that the White House is working on are supposed to be held in military courts where the suspects' rights will be limited for national security reasons. As for the CIA, Bush announced without batting an eyelid that it would continue to operate secret prisons ? some of which are probably located in our virtuous Europe.

?All the above is disturbing. Special courts where the rights of the accused will be limited and where trials will be based on confessions obtained under torture ? because one needs to call a spade a spade ? all this does not look at all like the democratic process that a country that claims to be at war should be following.?

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2. ?Bush Gets Rid of his Prisoners?

Philippe Paquet in independent La Libre Belgique (9/8) (circ. 46,900) analyzes: ?The speech in which George W. Bush on Wednesday night for the first time admitted the existence of CIA secret prisons came as a surprise but it was also a gamble. It not only surprised international public opinion but also American political circles. And that was one of the objectives of this speech, i.e. to cut the ground from under the feet of the Democratic opposition two months before the mid-terms elections?

?After having ordered 14 detainees to be transferred from CIA secret prisons to Guantanamo, President Bush intends to complete his ?normalization? process by bringing these suspected terrorists before military courts, provided Congress promptly votes a law authorizing him to do so. By shifting the responsibility for the continuation of the process to Congress, George Bush hopes to get rid of a major millstone, at least until the November 7 ballot.?

II. Media reaction report prepared by Samuel Maenhout (dutch) and Pierre Manderlier (French). Tel: 32-2-508-2410.

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